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TRANSLATIONS ON EASTERN EUROPE  
POLITICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
(FOUO 4/79)

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BULGARIA

STRUCTURE, FUNCTIONS OF CONURBATION SYSTEMS EXPLAINED

Sofia PRAVNA MISUL in Bulgarian No 2, 1979 pp 8-19

[Article by Professor Dimitur Dimitrov: "An Important Reform in the Territorial-Administrative Structure of the Bulgarian People's Republic"]

[Text] I

On 1 December 1978, at its ninth regular session, the Seventh National Assembly of the Bulgarian People's Republic passed the Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on People's Councils. This modest method of changing and supplementing the law on the people's councils factually marked the implementation of "essential reform in the administrative and territorial structure of the country."<sup>1</sup> It was directly linked with the voted amendment and supplement to the Electoral Law.

These laws definitively settled the basic problems related to the shaping of the settlement systems territorially and administratively. The conurbation system was definitively established as the basic unit and main cell within the system of the territorial-administrative structure of the Bulgarian People's Republic. The legal foundations for its organization, effective management, development, and improvement were laid in their entirety.

These laws marked the completion of a stage in the political-legal settlement of problems which were raised since the time that we began to mention settlement systems and the need for their organization and, subsequently, the need for the legal settlement of the basic problems related to such an organization. These laws are a brilliant proof of the great opportunities offered the BCP to analyze properly and profoundly the present and, on its basis, consider future requirements, and do what is necessary to meet them.

The legal completion of the reform of the territorial-administrative structure and management, however, cannot be entirely clarified without tracing the process which led to this completion. This is a process which led to the logical conclusion of the creation of the concept of the conurbation systems but which began as a single process of conventional consolidation on a territorial basis and, on this basis, of broadening the range of

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competence of the people's councils and their specialized organs. Gradually, this process assumed ever clearer trends, reaching the concept of the conurbation systems and of all consequences stemming from this concept related to the reorganization, on a territorial basis, of our obshtinas, and the need to amend and supplement managing and coordination rights of the people's councils. That is why, before substantiating the new legal stipulations contained in the Law on the Amendment and Supplement of the Law on the People's Councils, and the study of the direction of such changes, let us briefly survey the birth and process of reorganization of the people's councils on a territorial basis and the reasons for such reorganization, as well as the changes and adaptations of the tasks, functions, and rights of the people's councils in terms of this reorganization.

## II

A revolutionary reorganization was undertaken following the victory of the socialist revolution in Bulgaria: the breakdown of the old and development of new organs of people's regime locally, without the reorganization of their territorial base. The 5 December 1947 Constitution of the Bulgarian People's Republic stipulated that the people's councils were the base of the local administration as state local administrative organs of a socialist type. Following the Bulgarian Constitution, the first law on the people's councils was passed which elaborated the constitutional stipulations governing the people's councils and became effective as of 1 March 1948.

In the two decades that followed a number of changes were made in the territorial and administrative structures. The okoliyas were abolished and okrugs were set up. Certain insignificant changes were made in the rights of the people's councils. However, no substantial changes occurred. Such changes occurred with the reorganization of the state and economic management following the Seventh BCP Congress. In 1959 the beginning was laid or, stated more accurately, it is as of then that we should trace the beginning of the socialist process of reorganization of the local territorial and administrative units on an essentially new, socialist basis. At that point the territorial structure inherited from the past was abandoned, particularly that of the rural obshtinas, and the structure was laid on new foundations. Okrugs and obshtinas were considered administrative-economic units defined<sup>2</sup> "on the basis of all economic, administrative, and social considerations." They were to develop as territorial socialist "associations covering the entire political, state, economic, and cultural life over a given territory."<sup>3</sup>

The okrugs were set up as such largest local territorial-administrative units. They have remained unchanged to this day. The urban obshtinas, as well, were not changed a great deal. They merely broadened their territorial base essentially as a result of growth of the cities. The rural obshtinas, however, were radically reorganized. With few exceptions they were restructured mainly on the basis of the economic-organizational principle consisting of the consolidated TKZS [Labor Cooperative Farms]. Prior to the 1959 reconstruction of the state and economic management the country had 3,450 TKZS. Following their consolidation they totalled 960. Prior to the

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consolidation of the TKZS there were 112 city and 1,833 rural obshtinas; following the consolidation of the TKZS there were 867 rural obshtinas while the number of the city obshtinas remained the same. Bearing in mind that at that time some 100 cities also had their own TKZS, it becomes clear that each consolidated TKZS covered the territory of a consolidated obshtina. This was also the main principle governing the reorganization of the rural obshtina at that time.

Twenty years have passed since then. During that time new factors influenced the shaping of new requirements concerning the territorial and administrative structure of the country. These factors were comprehensive and many faceted. They acted with different strength in different directions. However, this influence was being felt ever more frequently and strongly and led to conclusions, sometimes partial, leading to the final conclusion as expressed in the concept of the settlement system.

As early as 1968, in his reports to the BCP Central Committee 24 July Plenum, T. Zhivkov insisted on the need for the "obshtina people's councils to focus their attention, above all and mainly on resolving the problems of the communal, socio-culture, and other requirements of the settlements, also requiring an expansion of their rights in that direction."

In the accountability report submitted to the 10th BCP Congress, T. Zhivkov again emphasized the need to resolve the same problems by the obshtina people's councils. However, a new element was now included in the formulation of solutions. The lag in resolving such problems "could be surmounted only by working on a longer-range basis and applying a broad comprehensive approach in which the development of the various services is consistent with the characteristics of the territorial units."

Work with a longer-range target and the use of the comprehensive approach in the solution of problems of settlements, big or small, were the basic conclusions drawn by T. Zhivkov in this respect at the 10th BCP Congress. Two years later, at the December 1972 BCP Central Committee Plenum, on the basis of these two main conclusions, he elaborated the first broad concept of the conurbation system which would resolve its problems precisely on a long-term comprehensive basis. In the Central Committee Accountability Report to the 11th BCP Congress, the task was set of "clearly elaborating a concept on the development of the network of settlements. Urban construction to be undertaken in settlements interrelated within a single system in which the material and technical base of the production and service area would be built not within the limits of the individual settlements but with a view to the requirements of the conurbation systems as a whole." The Congress decisions stipulate that the "further territorial location of production forces must be consistent with the requirements of the comprehensive approach....A conversion must be made to the designing and gradual building of comprehensive service centers by settlement and conurbation systems."

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It was on the basis of this decision that a number of political and legal documents were discussed and adopted shaping the overall concept of the conurbation system.

This brief review of the birth and development of the process leading to the shaping of the concept of the conurbation systems in the Bulgarian People's Republic shows that it was a process triggered by objective requirements, gradually ripening and becoming necessary, requirements which have influenced over the past twenty years the shaping and implementation of the BCP policy concerning the territorial-administrative structure of the country.

III

The overall view, attitude and proposal related to the solution of the ripe problem of a reform of the territorial-administrative structure of the Bulgarian People's Republic, regarding the concept of the settlement systems, was expressed at a special BCP Central Committee Plenum held on 9 and 10 March 1977. The report submitted by Grigor Stoichkov "On the Further Development and Improvement of the Territorial and Settlement System of the Bulgarian People's Republic," indicated all the factors which influenced the decision of raising this question at the BCP Central Committee Plenum. The territorial-structural plan of the Bulgarian People's Republic was considered as the concretizing of a single National Program on the territorial and settlement system of the country. The need was pointed out to adopt and refine a scientific norm governing the territorial and settlement structure. A general review was made of the total elaboration of all aspects and problems which may be triggered, implemented, and clarified with a view to undertaking the overall reorganization of the country's territorial-administrative system. Due to the need to elaborate the basic features of their content, at this point [words missing].

First, there have been some negative trends in the life and development of individual settlements and territories, such as the abandonment of settlements reaching nonpermissible levels and waste of public funds, unplanned development of territories surrounding settlements, disproportions between the accelerated development of the living standard and the structure of territories and settlements, insufficiently comprehensive development and buildup of working, residential, and recreational projects, public services, and the technical infrastructure, and the disturbance of the ecological balance in some parts of the country. All these shortcomings, weaknesses, and negative trends, assessed in the light of the new requirements, lead to the conclusion that the possibilities of the present system of territorial and settlement structure have already been exhausted.

Second, the current stage in the development of the Bulgarian People's Republic raises stricter requirements in the formulation and solution of the problems of the territorial and settlement structure. They must be considered as a comprehensive activity aimed at the effective organization of the territory and the utilization of resources, the rational location of



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the various material production and nonproduction projects, and their coordination and cooperated construction with a view to developing a harmonious living environment. In other words, they must be considered and resolved on a qualitatively new basis.

Third, this qualitatively new base was indicated in its essential outlines by Comrade T. Zhivkov at the 11th BCP Congress and the July 1976 BCP Central Committee Plenum. It was on its basis that the National Comprehensive Program for Upgrading the Living Standard, the General Plan for the Territorial Division of Production Forces, and the Integrated Territorial Structure Plan were elaborated on the basis of the long-term, comprehensiveness, continuity, and legality principles.

Fourth, whereas the principles of durability, comprehensiveness, and continuity are the base of a general plan formulated for decades to come, legality, ie, the formulation of a scientific legal system for the territorial and settlement structure, calls for the establishment and application of objective and scientific indicators governing the development of the territory and the settlements, in the course of which subjectivism, errors, and infatuations would be eliminated.

Fifth is the establishment, ratification, and strict control over the observance of uniform requirements and systems governing the structure of the country's territory, taking into consideration seven types of systems for the structure of the territory and the comprehensive development of the living environment, depending on the type of territory and the environment. Such uniform systems will be observed everywhere, throughout the country's territory, and regardless of the territory of whose people's councils they will be applied.

Sixth, the nature of the conurbation system on the country's territory will be determined through T. Zhivkov's formulation that "The settlement system is a qualitatively new object compared with the individual city or a group of administratively linked settlements. It is a single social organism in which the settlements are linked through common production activities, common services, and joint transportation. The settlement system covers settlements whose economic and social ties are steadily strengthening and considered as a single entity in the solution of socio-economic, territorial-structural, urban construction, and cultural problems. Housing needs will be ensured within the limits of the individual settlement system. The settlement systems will be used to resolve problems of limiting the growth of the big cities and the full utilization of developed yet unused housing facilities and material and technical installations in the villages. New housing construction in the settlement systems, particularly in their centers, should be allowed only after ensuring the full utilization of available housing within the villages within the system. The housing systems will accelerate the process of equilization of the town and country living conditions, ensuring the population of the small villages access to the goods and acquisitions. Identical working, living, and recreation conditions will be provided in the settlements without the rural population having to move, using better organized urban transportation among the settlements."<sup>10</sup>

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Seventh, the socialist system creates, for the first time, real opportunities for effecting and ensuring the planned development of settlement systems on the territory of a socialist state. The implementation of such possibilities was undertaken in socialist Bulgaria. This is a complex, difficult, and responsible matter, bearing in mind that such comprehensive development has not been completed by a single other country.

Eighth, there could be about 300 to 350 settlement systems within socialist Bulgaria of different types and with different functions. Some of them have already been established. Others are in the process of formation while others are as yet to be established. The highly developed settlement systems are agglomerations based on the big cities. Systems which are now being created on the basis of the theory of agroindustrial complexes without a city center are in their initial development stage.

Ninth, the establishment and development of settlement systems will ensure great advantages and opportunities in the field of economics, presently and in the future, with an intensified process of territorial concentration and specialization in public production. It will rationalize and facilitate the solution of the housing problem. It will facilitate the comprehensive public services, for national service systems will be based on the settlement systems.

Tenth, the establishment of settlement systems requires and demands improvements in the management of the territorial and settlement systems both vertically and horizontally. Vertically we must define the tasks, functions, and rights of the State Council, and Council of Ministers, and of the individual ministries and committees, and okrug people's councils. Horizontally, the tasks, functions, and competencies of the obshtina people's councils, as organs in charge of managing the settlement systems, were defined precisely in the Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on the People's Councils, voted by the ninth regular session of the Seventh National Assembly.

This study of the socio-economic aspect of the process of the shaping of the idea of settlement systems is necessary, for without it we cannot understand and clarify, substantiate, and bring to light the purpose and essence of the legal acts governing the basic stipulations of the concept of the reorganization of the territorial and settlement management under the conditions of conurbation systems. In other words, we cannot bring to light and explain the nature, content, and the purpose of the reform of the territorial-administrative structure of the country. The individual stipulations of the law related to this reform can be more easily clarified, analyzed, and interpreted, in terms of content and purpose, on the basis of the legal acts.

IV

The March 1977 BCP Central Committee Plenum provided the basis for the development of the overall legal system of the Bulgarian People's Republic as applicable to the reform of the territorial-administrative and settlement

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structure. The "Basic Directions for the Further Development and Improvement of the Territorial and Settlement Structure of the Bulgarian People's Republic" were adopted and approved at the March plenum on the basis of the report by G. Stoichkov "On the Further Development and Improvement of the Territorial and Settlement Structure of the Bulgarian People's Republic," and the co-report submitted by T. Bozhinov "Basic Aspects of the Application of the Multiplication Approach in the Territorial Concentration and Specialization of Public Production."

These "Basic Directions" are the broadest and most complete political documents issued so far on the formulations, substantiations, and concretizations of stipulations and tasks to be carried out on the basis of these regulations on the development and improvement of the territorial and settlement structure of the country.

Only a few days after the March 1977 BCP Central Committee Plenum, the Council of Ministers of the Bulgarian People's Republic adopted its Special Order No 35, dated 28 March 1977 on the implementation of the basic directions on the further development and improvement of the territorial and settlement structure of the Bulgarian People's Republic, as approved on 10 March 1977.

In accordance with Order No 35 of the Council of Ministers the National Construction Complex was assigned to elaborate and implement a "Comprehensive Program for Ensuring the Country with Territorial-Structure and Settlement-Structure Plans for the Seventh Five-Year Plan, and for the Five-Year Plans through 1990." An integrated territorial structure plan is being formulated.

Council of Ministers Decree No 77, dated 5 December 1977, "On the Creation and Development of Conurbation Systems in the Bulgarian People's Republic" ratified the establishment of settlement systems in the country with the settlements to be included in them. It approved the boundaries of these systems, their centers, and the specific type of system, ie, whether it is an already developed system, is in the process of development, or is as yet to be developed. With Decree No 77 of the Council of Ministers, dated 5 December 1977, the settlement systems were given a legal aspect and became factual links within our territorial system.

Several days later, at the end of the year, the National Assembly passed the Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on the Territorial and Settlement Structure of 1973. With this amendment and supplement, adopted on 22 December 1977, published in D. V. No 102, dated 30 December 1977, the settlement systems are legitimized as a new link within the system of the territorial and the conurbation structure of the country, and a supplement is added to Article 37 stating that "Conurbation systems are the base of the territorial and settlement structure of the country." The tasks, functions, and rights of the Council for the Territorial and Conurbation System of the Council of Ministers were concretized in terms of settlement systems as well.

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The Law on Councils of Settlement Systems was adopted at the same session of the National Assembly. According to the law, passed on 22 December 1977, starting with 1 January 1978 each conurbation system must set up special organs--settlement system councils. The purpose of these organs is to coordinate the activities of the respective organs and organizations in the implementation of a single economic, social, and cultural policy within the settlement system.

The settlement system councils are original organs with typical intermediary and transitional tasks, functions, and rights which will be extended until the first leading organs of the settlement systems will be elected when the latter will become integrated territorial-administrative units in the spring of 1979. The purpose of these councils was to undertake to coordinate the activities of the already established systems, involving members of the people's councils of all settlements within the conurbation systems.

With Decree No 7 of the Council of Ministers, dated 14 March 1978, a directive was passed on the activities of the councils of settlement systems. On the basis of the Law on Councils of Settlement Systems, the directive refined and concretized details on the structuring and functioning of these councils.

With Decree No 16, dated 21 April 1978, amending and supplementing the Regulation on the Application of the Law on the Territorial and Settlement System, the Council of Ministers introduced all the required amendments to the application of this law following the legislative establishment of the settlement systems and of their managements.

These laws show that following the adoption by the BCP Central Committee of the basic political document "Basic Directions on the Further Development and Improvement of the Territorial and Settlement Structure of the Bulgarian People's Republic," a number of legal acts followed such as laws, decrees, orders, directives, and so on, thus giving a legal aspect to a number of new concepts whose implementation had to be undertaken as soon as was possible. The adoption of these laws legitimized the settlement systems, set up their provisional organs, defined their provisional tasks, functions, and rights within the existing system of organs of the people's councils of the settlements within the framework of the conurbation systems, and ensured the initial coordination of activities of such organs of the new unit--the conurbation system.

V

On 1 December 1978 the National Assembly passed three closely interrelated laws: the Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on the People's Councils, the Law Extending the Term of the People's Councils, and the Law Amending and Supplementing the Electoral Law. They settled a number of urgent problems related to the further organization of settlement systems, the shaping of their management and power authorities, and the definition of their tasks, functions, and rights as organs of the new territorial-administrative unit--the conurbation system.

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The Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on the People's Councils is of basic significance. This law, as is stipulated in the interpretations added to the draft bill by its author--Gr. Stoichkov, deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers--codifies "the building of the conurbation systems as a new form of the organization of settlements in which settlements and intersettlement territories will be organically linked and within whose borders comprehensive human activities will take place."

With a view to the lasting solution of this problem the time has come for the conurbation system, at this point territorially and administratively organized, to replace its provisional organs--the settlement system councils--with its permanent organs.

According to the law each conurbation system with all its settlements will represent a single obshtina. Consequently, the conurbation system will represent the basic territorial-administrative unit of the Bulgarian People's Republic organized as an obshtina. As an obshtina it will have a single people's obshtina council which will be elected by the population of the conurbation system residing in all settlements on the obshtina's territory. This obshtina people's council will be the elective and representative organ of the power of the conurbation system. Only in some big settlement systems such as Sofia, Varna, and Plovdiv, within the framework of the obshtina its territory may be divided into rayons on whose territory rayon people's councils will be elected. This stipulation is exceptional and its purpose is to facilitate the management of the biggest conurbation systems in the country. This exception was legitimized on the suggestion of the Council of Ministers with State Council Ukase. The basic principle of one conurbation system--one obshtina people's council--shall apply to all other conurbation systems in the country.

The development of the conurbation systems largely changes the tasks, functions, and rights of the obshtina councils of the conurbation system. In this case it is not a question merely of a conventional territorial broadening of the rights of obshtina people's councils and their executive committees on the expanded territory of the settlement system. It is no longer a case of changing in essence the tasks, functions, and rights of obshtina people's councils within the conurbation system. This is made most clear in the amendment to Article 11a of the Law on the People's Councils, whose full text follows:

"Within the limits of their competence the obshtina people's councils shall:

- a. Organize and control comprehensively the building and development of conurbation systems and individual settlements, and ensure the effective utilization of material, natural and manpower resources;
- b. Adopt a plan and budget for the development of conurbation systems and settlements within the framework of ceilings and indicators approved by the okrug people's councils;

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- c. Consider and submit for approval territorial-structure and urban construction plans for conurbation systems and settlements;
- d. Control urbanization and communal activities;
- e. Ensure the effective utilization of built up residential and socio-cultural facilities and the maximum concentration of capital investments;
- f. Manage comprehensive social services and the self-satisfaction of the population with agricultural province;
- g. Contribute to and control the implementation of tasks in industry, construction, agriculture, transportation, communications, recreation, tourism, and protection of the environment and the land;
- h. Help in the implementation of the measures carried out on their territory by other state and public organs and organizations;
- i. Coordinate the activities of all establishments and economic organizations on their territory with a view to the comprehensive development of the obshtina."

The thus formulated content of the rights of obshtina people's councils synthesizes everything important and necessary to be implemented by such councils--direct guidance, assistance, and coordination. Perhaps practical experience and the experience of the future will prove the need to change or add to these rights. This is merely the beginning. However, even as they are currently stipulated at the beginning, such rights earmark quite well and adequately that which the obshtina people's councils of the conurbation systems can and must carry out. The practical testing of the system will require a certain period of time.

VI

The Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on the People's Councils contains an entirely new chapter three. The chapter is entitled "Municipalities." Indeed, this is an entirely new institution in our system of people's councils, an institution brought to light by the need to ensure the suitable management of all settlements within the conurbation system and the development, enrichment and improvement of socialist democracy.

The municipalities are executive organs of the obshtina people's councils. They shall consist of individual settlements or groups of settlements with a population exceeding 100 people outside the obshtina center.

Bearing in mind the shape of the current settlement systems, we could positively claim that it would hardly be a settlement system without municipalities, ie, which will not have individual settlements outside the obshtina seat, with a population in excess of 100 people. Consequently, the municipality becomes not the exception but the rule in our conurbation systems.

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The number of municipalities within the conurbation system shall be determined by the obshtina peoples council of the conurbation system. It shall also determine the seat of the municipality if it will serve a group of settlements. As to the settlement in which the seat of the obshtina council of the conurbation system will be located, it shall not have a municipality. The executive committee of the obshtina people's council of the conurbation system will assume the role of the municipality of that settlement.

The municipality shall consist of the mayor, deputy mayors, a secretary, and municipal people's councilors. There shall be one mayor with more than one deputy mayor if necessary. The number of deputy mayors per individual municipality within the conurbation system shall be determined by the obshtina people's council of the respective conurbation system. There shall be no more than one municipal secretary.

The people's councilors of the municipality may differ in number depending on the number of residents of the settlement with a municipality. In the case of a municipality with a population not to exceed 10,000 there shall be from two to seven people's councilors. In a municipality with a population of over 10,000 there shall be from five to nine councilors.

The executive committee of the obshtina people's council of the conurbation system shall determine the number of electoral districts each of which will elect one people's councilor for the municipality, depending on the size of the population in the municipality. As to the mayor, he shall be elected directly by the voters of all electoral districts of the municipality for a term of two and one-half years, which shall also be the term of the people's councilors of the municipality and the people's councilors of the obshtina people's council of the conurbation system.

The deputy mayors and the secretaries of the individual municipalities shall have a special status. Since the municipality as a whole, as a collective organ, is an organ of the executive committee of the obshtina people's council of the conurbation system, the obshtina people's council shall appoint deputy mayors and secretaries for all municipalities on the territory of the conurbation system. This obshtina people's council may relieve the deputy mayors and secretaries of municipalities from their positions.

It is obvious that the municipality is a separate collective organ set up on a special basis. The mayor shall be elected by all voters of the municipality while the deputy mayors and the municipal secretary shall be appointed by the obshtina people's council of the entire conurbation system, while the people's councilors of the municipality shall be elected only by the voters of the settlement set up as a separate municipality. This organization of the municipality is based on its status as an organ of the executive committee of the obshtina people's council and the need for the mayor, the head of the municipality, to be directly elected by those whom he will lead as their elected mayor.

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As to the tasks, functions, and rights of the municipality as an entirely new institution, they shall be determined, in accordance with the new law, as follows:

"The municipality shall:

- a. Ensure the implementation of the decisions of the obshtina people's council and its executive committee and of the tasks stemming from these decisions;
- b. Organize the urbanization and maintenance of streets and engineering systems;
- c. Be in charge of cleanliness and hygiene;
- d. Ensure the observance of public orders;
- e. Provide the population with administrative services;
- f. Carry out other assignments entrusted to it on the basis of legal acts or by the superior state organs.

The basic problems related to the competence of the municipality shall be resolved on a collective basis. The municipality shall pass decisions and orders.

It is clear that the municipality shall be granted functions and rights to resolve the necessary problems, consistent with the nature of the municipality as an organ for the implementation of strictly local tasks related to the administration of the settlement considered a municipality. As to all other matters of a general administrative nature, affecting not only the entire conurbation system but its municipalities, they shall be resolved by the obshtina people's council of the conurbation system.

It is natural at this point to raise the following question: Was it not possible for the municipalities to set up municipal people's councils such as is the case with the obshtina and okrug territorial-administrative units? In other words, why could the current reform of the territorial-administrative structure of the country not establish a three-level system of councils--municipal, obshtina, and okrug?

This question cannot be answered simply with a yes or no. Inevitably, the answer must contain a minimum interpretation. In my view, it is not necessary in the case of this reform to set up a three-step and three-level system of people's councils. It is not necessary, for this would conflict with the basic intent of the conurbation system as the basic administrative-territorial unit. Adopting a three-level and three-step system would mean that a settlement set up as a municipality will become the lowest, ie, the basic administrative-territorial unit. Yet, it is precisely this that was



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neither the intent nor the purpose of the reform. The main intent and basic purpose of the reform is to make precisely the conurbation system the basic territorial-administrative unit. This settlement system shall be considered as a single entity. Within its limits it shall resolve a number of important problems which so far could not be resolved essentially because individual obshtinas had their own people's councils. Yet, the coordination among their administrative activities neither was nor could reach a level capable of resolving the problems which were triggered by the naturally existing or naturally developing conurbation systems. Consequently, the main thing was to set up a conurbation system also as a single obshtina with a single organ capable of resolving all problems of the conurbation system and of all settlements included within it.

It is on the basis of such statements and conclusions concerning the current status and prospects and possibilities for the future that we could convincingly state that not the municipality, ie, each settlement, that should be considered a territorial-administrative unit but precisely the opposite--the naturally linked or to be linked settlements within a single conurbation system to be developed as a new, a truly new territorial-administrative unit. This was precisely the reason for the reform. As to the organization of municipalities, they should be considered a manifestation of the rational division of tasks, functions, and rights among territorial-administrative organs within the conurbation system and its constituting settlements. In no case should such a division hinder or restrict the possibilities of the obshtina people's council to resolve entirely and fully all problems of the conurbation system, ie, questions which are formulated by reality and which must be resolved now and in the future ever more urgently. This system offers neither hindrances nor restrictions, for the municipal organs are the organs of administration of the conurbation system as a territorial-administrative unit, as organs of its obshtina people's council.

## VII

The reform of the territorial-administrative system of the country is based on conclusions drawn from the study of an objectively ripening and developing process; the structuring, restructuring and adaptation of the population and the settlements to the new working and living conditions and requirements characterizing our developed socialist society. This reform is also accompanied by a manifestation of a broadened socialist democracy in the course of its implementation. This broadening is in the spirit of the Leninist theory of the ever broader involvement of the working people in the solution of problems pertaining to their life and work, and conditions and possibilities for improving the hygiene and the urbanization of the settlements.

The expansion of manifestations of socialist democracy in the implementation of the reform of our territorial-administrative structure may be concretized in several directions.

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The first is a decreased membership of the people's councils. Thus, the number of the Sofia Obshtina Council, as the largest conurbation system in the country, shall be increased to 250 people's councilors. The obshtina people's councils of the conurbation systems will have a structure which will change according to the size of the population of the conurbation system. The minimum number of people's councilors will be 50 while their maximum number may not exceed 150.

The second is the establishment of the institution of people's councilors of the municipality. The number of people's councilors in the individual municipalities will be based on the size of the population of the respective settlement or municipality, ranging from a minimum of two to a maximum of nine. Unquestionably, the people's councilors of a municipality represent a major step forward in the development of socialist democracy even within the smallest settlements or groups of settlements within the conurbation systems.

The third is the establishment of the institution of direct mayoralty elections. This, as was pointed out by the author of the draft bill amending and supplementing the electoral law, Gr. Stoichkov, in his motivations for the draft bill, is a manifestation of the implementation of the "requirements of the program of the Bulgarian Communist Party on expanding the elective principle, extending it to some executive organs." The mayor is elected by the voters of the settlement or settlements within a municipality. Thus the mayor is a directly elected official, the first directly elected executive organ within the system of organs of the conurbation system. That is why he must periodically report to the population of the municipality his own and the municipality's activities in the spirit and the norms of the socialist democracy.

The fourth is expanding the rights and obligations of the elective organs within the obshtina people's council. Socialist democracy, as the first component, has within its development a process of expanding the elective nature of organs which manage a socialist society; its other component is broadening the rights and obligations of these elective organs. We pointed out how boldly the rights and obligations of the elective organs of the settlement systems are increased. Naturally, this increase is not selfseeking. It is the natural consequence of the broadened and more complex problems to be resolved by these organs under the conditions of the new basic territorial-administrative unit of the country--the conurbation system. However, this expansion could and should be considered also a manifestation of the development of the content of socialist democracy.

Therefore, the three laws passed by the ninth regular session of the Seventh National Assembly of the Bulgarian People's Republic laid the legal foundations of an important reform in the territorial-administrative structure of our country. The reform is as yet to prove its timeliness and fruitfulness. Actually, this reform is the completion of a stage in the development and improvement of the country's territorial-administrative structure, which lasted, in fact, some 20 years. Today life and practical experience will

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prove its merits or shortcomings, omissions, or gaps. Unquestionably, however, this reform will provide a strong impetus to the efforts for the solution under contemporary conditions and requirements of problems related to the territorial-administrative structure of our country, thus contributing to the successful building of a developed socialist society in the Bulgarian People's Republic.

Footnotes

1. See "Arguments in Favor of the Draft Law Amending and Supplementing the Law on the People's Councils, Proceedings of the Ninth Session of the Seventh National Assembly, 29 November--1 December 1978."
2. T. Zhivkov, "Reports to the Third Regular Session of the Third National Assembly, 1959," "National Assembly Minutes, 1959," page 14.
3. Ibid, page 17.
4. For an overall interpretation of this matter see Dimitur Dimitrov, "Narodnite Suveti i Preustroystvoto na Durzhavnoto i Stopanskoto Rukovodstvo v NRB" [The People's Councils and the Reorganization of the State and Economic Management in the Bulgarian People's Republic] Sofia, 1961, pp 35 and following.
5. Todor Zhivkov, "Osnovni Nasoki za Po-Natatushnoto Razvitiie na Sistemata na Upravlenie na Nasheto Obshtestvo" [Main Directions in the Further Development of the System of Administration of our Society] Sofia, 1968, pp 79-80.
6. Tenth BCP Congress, Minutes, 1971, page 96.
7. Todor Zhivkov, "Za Posledovatelno Izpulnenie Resheniyata na X Kongres na BKP za Povishavane Zhiznenoto Ravnishte na Naroda" [For the Systematic Implementation of the Decisions of the Tenth BCP Congress on Upgrading the Living Standards of the People], Partizdat, Sofia, 1972, pp 108 and following.
8. 11th BCP Congress, "Minutes," Partizdat, Sofia, 1976, page 65.
9. Ibid, page 661.
10. T. Zhivkov, "Izbrani Suchineniya" [Selected Works], Vol 25, page 175.
11. See "Osnovni Nasoki za Po-Natatushnoto Razvitiie i Usuvurshenstvuvane na Teritorialnoto i Selishtnoto Ustroytvo na Narodna Republika Bulgariya" [Basic Directions for the Further Development and Improvement of the Territorial and Settlement Structure of the Bulgarian People's Republic], Partizdat, Sofia, 1977; Marin Devedzhiev, "Selishtnite Sistemie" [Conurbation Systems], Nauka i Izkustvo, Sofia, 1978; Lilyana Vasileva, "Problemi na Kompleksnoto Razvitiie na Teritorialnite Edinitsi" [Problems of the Comprehensive Development of Territorial Units], Partizdat, Sofia, 1978.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

BRIEFS

REPORT ON EXECUTIONS--From an Egyptian source comes the report that some weeks ago approximately 20 officers were executed in Libya after an unsuccessful coup d'etat. Col al-Qadhdhafi reportedly attended the executions and refused to return the bodies of those executed to their families for funerals. Two Czech advisers who were implicated in the plot were expelled to Prague. [Text] [Paris VALEURS ACTUELLES in French 30 Apr 79 p 27]

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POLAND

ITALIAN DAILY COMMENTS ON CHURCH-STATE AFFAIRS

Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 20 Apr 79 p 5

[Article by Sandro Scabello: "Church and State on the Road to Convergence"]

[Text] Warsaw. "We cannot pretend that the Pope thinks only of Poland or that it enjoys a privileged position in his thoughts. Our requests must be more delicate, cautious and discreet. It is certain that the Pope will do all he can to achieve a normalization of relations between Church and state in Poland, but we must be patient and wait. In the meantime, a few steps forward have been made. For the first time the government has recognized that the Church also is interested in the country's problems."

The bishop we are interviewing at the seat of the Polish episcopate is one of Cardinal Wyszynski's closest aides. (He asked us not to mention his name because he is the only priest authorized to speak on the record with journalists and is the official spokesman for the don Orszulik curia.) He is part of that "current" in the Polish Episcopal Conference which insisted that the date of Pope Wojtyla's trip to Poland be coordinated with the government. As is known, part of the episcopate had taken a definite stance in choosing 13 May, the nine-hundredth anniversary of Saint Stanislaw.

In the long run, the more pragmatic and realistic approach prevailed, namely the one supported by both those in the Vatican and in Warsaw who feared that the Pontiff's visit in May would result in negatively influencing the process of conciliation between Church and state which now, after three decades of harsh conflicts and bitter political tensions, is witnessing moments of promising detente, obviously influenced by the election of Karol Wojtyla to the papal throne of Saint Peter.

"It is necessary to proceed very attentively and with caution in this phase of normalization," continued our interlocutor. "Our main objective is to be recognized judicially. Up until now we have been suspended in a vacuum, and in Polish law we represent nothing. Every parish priest, every bishop, must be approved by the government. If the government is sincere in its statements, it must devote itself to solving this very important problem."

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There are 45 seminaries, 25 dioceses, 6,700 parishes, almost 14,000 churches, and 20,000 priests (on the average 500 are ordained every year); with these numbers Polish Catholicism, deeply rooted in all strata of the society, exhibits its power and omnipresence: 95 percent of the population has been baptized and 80 percent is considered to be practicing.

This also explains how the Church, despite its assertion that it does not "wish to assume a role of a political nature" and does not "wish to view itself as an alternative to the system," has become the center and the refuge of Polish opposition, is engaged in the struggle for civil rights and basic freedoms, and supports the so-called "flying universities," that is, university courses conducted at home where all which is forbidden officially is taught. Now, following years of ideological clashes, of curtailment of religious freedom, of a hermetical separation of the two differing views of the world, coexistence with the communist regime has become less precarious.

Ecclesiastical authorities demand, among other things, the abolition of censorship and of artificial printing limits set for Catholic magazines, and demand as well the cessation of discrimination against the faithful in places of employment. They claim the right of access to radio and television and complain about the limited number of building permits for new churches. The fundamental objective, however, remains legal recognition. Will it be possible? The minister of the Office of Religious Affairs, Kasimierz Kakol, answers: "If I were to use a meteorological expression, I would say that the barometer has established on nice weather. We are on the road to an advanced normalization of relations, which means the beginning of different forms of collaboration. Today, a conflict between Church and state does not exist in Poland. There exists a series of complex problems, also of a theoretical nature, which we are attempting to resolve. Among the most important of these is the legal status of the Church, which demands to be recognized as a legal institution."

"The problem is difficult to solve because, for socialist law, there is no difference between public and private juridical persons. We are well aware that the Church is not an organization like all the others and thus we are examining the situation thoroughly. Experts on both sides have already met three times. Other meetings are foreseen for the future, but it will not be easy to find a position of mutual accord."

Janusz Stefanowicz, editor-in-chief of the daily SLOWO POWSZECHNE (Universal Word), belongs to the PAX Group (the progressive social Catholic movement), echoes the party's positions, and speaks of a "new philosophy of rapport." The Church no longer struggles only for its rights and privileges but also for reasons of state, and collaborates with political power. This is a very significant turn. Gierek considers the Church an integral, inseparable part of Polish civilization, and, for its part, the bishopric recognizes that the mistrust it nourished vis a vis the communist state was not based on ideological or philosophical motives. "We are

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"Witnessing two parallel, though not identical, evolutions, each having some points of contact."

Krzysztof Kozlowski, deputy editor-in-chief of TYGODNIK POWSZECHNY (Universal Weekly) of the ZNAK Group, the weekly sponsored by Karol Wojtyla when he was archbishop of Krakow, is very skeptical. "Collaboration? At the present I don't even see the ground in which it might take place," he stated. "Certainly the gestures of kindness and detente are present on the other side, but fundamentally the situation has not changed. Let us examine, for example, the problem of alcohol among the young. The government has asked more than once for the Church's collaboration to combat the phenomenon but has simultaneously continued to increase the production of alcoholic beverages which has come to represent one of the most conspicuous profits of the economy; 50 million zlotys. The stores may be out of foodstuffs, but alcohol will never be lacking."

Alcoholism, abortion, divorce: Poland, which sees a daily increase in religious vocation (this year seminaries have turned away one-third of the applicants because of lack of space) and whose churches are always crowded, should be shielded from such evils. Instead, the young drink more and more, the number of couples who separate after a few months of married life is on the rise (especially among the young), and more and more often pregnancies are interrupted. (According to semiofficial sources there are one million abortions a year in Poland, while the official figures mention 300,000.) How come?

"We do not control youth organizations. They are all in the hands of the state," observed Kozlowski. "Therefore, how can we act decisively without the proper framework? The Church can only rely on the mass on Sunday, house visits by parish priests and a few Catholic magazines. There are some Catholic clubs in the larger cities. There is even a Catholic university with a very limited number of students: 30 majoring in history, 35 majoring in philology . . . . It is dramatic." Minister Kakol limited himself to raising the question, a bit mischievously, "if it is true that 80 percent of the Polish people are practicing Catholics, there should be no problems either with divorce or with abortion in Poland," and invited the Church "to better influence youth" because "the state cannot always be responsible for everything."

In Poland, 116 Catholic publications including papers and magazines are published. Minister Kakol himself provided us with this information. However, the number printed is always forcibly limited. Why? "Because there is a paper crisis," answered the minister of the Office for Religious Affairs, "and the printing limitations affect all, including the party's papers. For 17 years I have directed a weekly which deals in legal questions and I have experienced difficulties of every sort with printing. My magazines always sold out and I didn't even have one copy left over. I had to wait several years before they increased my printing allotment."

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Kozlowski is unable to suppress a smile when we cite Minister Kakol's reply. "We print 40,000 copies," he said, "half of which are sold through subscriptions. That leaves only 20,000 copies for newsstands, and if one were to realize that in Poland there are 40,000 sales outlets, this means that we sell a copy for every two newsstands, whereas we could easily print 3 or 4 times that number. There is no paper . . . . This is an excuse that can be used with foreign journalists. We've had a paper crisis for 30 years."

"The Church is a unique institution, a place where one can meet and discuss . . . it is a sanctuary both for believers and nonbelievers," explained Kozlowski. "Leftwing intellectuals rediscovered it because the authorities denied them the opportunity to meet and express themselves. For many of them the Church represents a moral authority, for others it represents a political force. However, they do not demand that the Church act directly on the political plane, but rather that it fight for the recognition of basic liberties in an authentically democratic, social and political system."

PAX and ZNAK are two very different groups, the former perfectly integrated within the system and the latter officially recognized by the bishopric. According to Janusz Stefanowicz, it is "idiotic" to compare the two groups in terms of the bishopric's support or lack thereof because "with respect to the Church, they are autonomous and neither of them is assured official support." Is it really impossible to hypothesize a convergence between the two orientations?

"

"There is a fundamental difference between us and them," answered Stefanowicz. Those associated with ZNAK accept the status quo in Poland as a necessary evil and do not wish to become integrated in the regime, whereas we believe that Catholics can modify the socialist system, but only by acting from within. As it was necessary for Poland to proceed rapidly in the modernization of the economic sector in the 1930s, so a great leap toward a more open and pluralistic society will become inevitable in the 1980s."

Answers Kozlowski: "Our mentalities are too different. Mr Piasecki (one of the founders of PAX-ed.), who died recently, used to look only at politics, wanted to follow a political career and wanted to found the fourth Polish party. In other words, he had a fixed idea in his head: politics and the participation in power. We do not have and will never have such objectives."

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